United Nations S/2016/384

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 April 2016

Original: English

Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the twenty-sixth submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), paragraph 17, 2165 (2014), paragraph 10, 2191 (2014), paragraph 5, and 2258 (2015), paragraph 5, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on the data available to United Nations agencies on the ground, from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, other Syrian sources and open sources. Data from United Nations agencies on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 31 March 2016. More recent data have been included when available.

II. Major developments

A. Developments on the ground

3. The cessation of hostilities outlined in Security Council resolution 2268 (2016), by and large, continued to hold since entering into effect on 27 February 2016. As a result, March saw a clear decrease in the number of military operations. With ongoing meetings of the Task Force on Humanitarian Access, formed by the International Syria Support Group, and a simplified process for requesting approval for inter-agency convoys from Syrian authorities, the United Nations has continued to increase its assistance to people in besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line locations during the reporting period. From 1 January to 12 April 2016, the United Nations reached 450,725 of 4.6 million civilians in those locations. In March, inter-agency convoys brought food aid to 102,125 of 486,000 civilians in besieged areas. However, more needs to be done to reach all people in besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority cross-line locations to which access has been formally approved. Delays in the final clearance of convoys, irregular access for medical and humanitarian workers and the removal of medicine and medical supplies and surgical items remain issues of significant concern.

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4. In line with resolution 2258 (2015), developments on the ground with regard to compliance with resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic is briefly described below. This information is without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Ceasefire of the International Syria Support Group.

5. While the cessation of hostilities decreased the level of fighting throughout the country, the Syrian people continued to be particularly affected by the conflict in those areas where military operations remained most intense, including areas of Rif Dimashq, Aleppo, Idlib, Dar'a, Hasakah, Dayr al-Zawr and Homs governorates. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented attacks by all parties to the conflict, including government forces, non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups.[1] Numerous reports were received of air strikes, artillery fire and mortar and rocket attacks, as well as of car and suicide bombings, killing and maiming innocent civilians. Private property, civilian infrastructure and protected buildings, such as schools and hospitals, also continued to be damaged and destroyed.

6. Fighting in Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates continued to take a toll on civilians. On 4 March, OHCHR received reports of two air strikes along with artillery fire in the village of al-Shifoniya, near the town of Duma, allegedly killing at least one civilian and injuring three first responders. On 10 March, information received by OHCHR indicated that at least 4 civilians had been allegedly killed, including a child, and 10 others injured by shelling by pro-government forces in Duma. On the same day, intense fighting displaced 2,500 individuals within the subdistrict of Tall. On 31 March, OHCHR received reports that 37 civilians, including nine women and 12 children, had been killed and at least 40 others injured by numerous air strikes on various areas in the town of Dayr al-Asafir. The strikes had reportedly hit houses, a makeshift clinic, the grand mosque, a school and two civil defence centres.

7. In Barza, government and pro-government forces impeded freedom of movement by preventing civilians, including public employees and students, from moving in and out of the southern Damascus neighbourhood. The nearby area of Qabun was simultaneously sealed off from outside traffic. The strict restrictions remained in effect for more than two weeks in late March.

8. In Aleppo governorate, attacks resulting in the deaths and displacement of civilians continued to be reported. According to OHCHR, air strikes on 2 March on I'zaz killed six civilians, including three children. Fighting between the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units forces and non-State armed groups continued along the Castello route, one of the last remaining major supply routes in the eastern part of Aleppo city. On 3 March, OHCHR also received reports that non-State armed opposition groups had attacked the Kurdish-held area of Shaykh Maqsud in Aleppo, reportedly killing at least one civilian. On 6 March, similar attacks were reported to have resulted in the deaths of at least 12 civilians and in injuring 40 others. On 11 March, OHCHR documented air strikes that struck the non-State armed opposition group-held neighbourhoods of Marjah, Ma'adi, and Salihin in the eastern part of Aleppo city, reportedly killing 8 civilians and injuring 15 others. On

[1] On 30 May 2013, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Nusrah Front were designated as terrorist groups by the Security Council in accordance with resolution 1267 (1999). The two groups operate in the Syrian Arab Republic.

20 March, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacked the village of Kafr Saghir in the north-eastern countryside of Aleppo, reportedly killing dozens of civilians and illegally detaining several others. There are currently some 65,000 civilians displaced around Aleppo owing to the recent fighting.

9. In Idlib governorate, attacks on residential and market areas resulted in the deaths of civilians and damage to infrastructure. For example, on 1 March, OHCHR reported that air strikes had struck residential areas in the village of Z'ayniyah, reportedly killing at least 3 civilians and injuring 10 others. On 4 March, pro-government forces reportedly hit residential areas in Khan Shaykhun, allegedly killing three civilians, including a child, and injuring several others. On 7 March, missiles fired from an aircraft hit a local marketplace in Abu al-Zuhur, allegedly killing at least 19 civilians, including four children, and injuring 42 others. On 17 March, at least four civilians were reportedly killed and five injured when air strikes struck houses in the village of Ghassaniyah. The village of Arihah was allegedly targeted a number of times during the reporting period, including on 29 March when seven civilians were injured by an air strike allegedly hitting a house.

10. Raqqah governorate also suffered from a number of deadly attacks. On 1 March, an air strike damaged the main water station in the city of Raqqah, interrupting water service in 80 per cent of the city for several days. On 2 March, OHCHR reported that several air strikes on Raqqah city had allegedly killed at least seven civilians, including women and children, and injured dozens more. On 18 and 19 March, further air strikes in civilian-populated areas allegedly killed 43 civilians, including nine children, and injured at least 60.

11. In Homs governorate, attacks resulted in civilians being killed or injured. On 19 March, OHCHR reported that an air strike on the village of Daminah, southwest of the city of Homs, had allegedly killed one civilian and injured four others. On 27 March, government and allied forces seized the cities of Palmyra and Qaryatayn from ISIL. On 9 April, the United Nations conducted an inter-agency mission to Palmyra to complete a rapid assessment of the humanitarian situation on the ground. The mission confirmed that few civilians remained in the area and that there was a lack of water and electricity. Syrian and Russian forces have begun removing explosive weapons, which are reported to pose a significant threat across much of the area. Owing to the attacks in and around Palmyra during the reporting period, OHCHR was not able to gather full information on civilian casualties. However, OHCHR reports that air strikes against ISIL in Palmyra allegedly killed a child on 8 March and a civilian between 8 and 10 March. An analysis by the Operational Satellite Applications Programme and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research indicates significant damage to civilian infrastructure in Palmyra, with more than 600 damaged structures, including severe damage to the national hospital. The Programme and the Institute have also identified a total of 37 damaged structures within the ancient city of Palmyra, with 14 structures destroyed, 8 severely damaged and 15 moderately damaged. The majority of the damaged structures are in the vicinity of the Valley of the Tombs and the Necropolis, west and southwest of Palmyra.

12. The local ceasefire agreement pertaining to the district of Wa'r in Homs, which came into force on 1 December 2015, was suspended by both sides in early March. This reportedly came as a result of a disagreement between both sides on

issues related to the status of detainees, weapons surrender by non-State armed opposition groups and the evacuation of remaining non-State armed opposition groups' fighters from the neighbourhood. Since 10 March, government forces have closed main roads leading into the district, trapping some 800 civilians in and out of the community, and reduced the bread quota allocated to the district. The two medical facilities in Wa'r were reported to be operating on a limited basis. Critical medical evacuations are also reportedly being prevented by government forces. A three-year-old boy who sustained a head injury while playing reportedly died on 19 March after being prevented from seeking medical care outside Wa'r for three consecutive days.

13. Hasakah governorate has seen the continued displacement of persons during the reporting period. On 3 March, the clashes around Markada (also in the subdistrict of Arishah) displaced 6,000 civilians. OHCHR also reported an improvised explosive device attack on 7 March, claimed by ISIL, outside a school and restaurant in the Wasati neighbourhood of Qamishli, which injured five civilians, including children.

14. In Dayr al-Zawr governorate, attacks by ISIL continued to be reported in March. On 2 March, ISIL launched an unsuccessful offensive to advance on the city of Dayr al-Zawr. On 7 March, ISIL reportedly fired mortars at the government-held areas of Jurah and Qusur in Dayr al-Zawr, striking near a school and killing at least 10 civilians, including three children. At least 14 others, including children, were injured, some seriously. On 13 March, ISIL fighters launched attacks on the Qusur neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly killing three civilians.

15. In Dar'a governorate, attacks by artillery and mortar fire continued to be reported, and the area has seen further displacement of civilians. On 8 March, OHCHR reported that, during an alleged mortar attack by pro-government forces on opposition-held areas of southern Dar'a city, three civilians had been allegedly killed and an unknown number of others injured. On the same day, two civilians were reportedly killed near the neighbouring town of Mal, held by non-State armed opposition groups, by either artillery or mortar fire. Partners on the ground estimate that, since 21 March, as many as 12,500 civilians have been displaced from western rural Dar'a owing to fighting among several non-State armed opposition groups.

16. On 31 March, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation stated that the Russian Federation was taking direct part in planning the military operation in Palmyra, adding that its air force had launched more than 2,000 air strikes against ISIL. Meanwhile, the Central Command of the United States of America confirmed that, in March, at least 137 strikes had been carried out by the United States-led coalition against ISIL targets in the governorates of Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Hasakah, Raqqah and Homs. OHCHR received various reports of air strikes, allegedly conducted by international actors, which caused civilian casualties. However, OHCHR was not able to verify adequately the origin of the reported air strikes.

B. Human rights

17. The number of abuses and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law documented by OHCHR during the reporting period reflected the decrease in the level of fighting throughout the country.

18. Nevertheless, OHCHR continued to receive reports of abuses and killings by ISIL in areas under their control. On 2 March, ISIL fighters allegedly shot dead two civilians caught attempting to smuggle food items into the besieged area of Dayr al-Zawr town. On 7 March, ISIL reportedly beheaded two young men in Dayr al-Zawr accused of cooperating with government forces. On 14 March, ISIL reportedly publicly stoned to death a woman accused of adultery in the Jaradiq area of Mayadin, in Dayr al-Zawr.

19. OHCHR also received reports of the inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees held in Tartus Central Prison, in violation of their human rights. Around 215 of the 700 people detained in the Tartus Central Prison are alleged to be held under the Counter-Terrorism Act, with all 215 detainees reportedly being housed in the same living quarters. Reports were received of beating and attacks with sharp objects. OHCHR received information that a hunger strike started on 1 March had ended on 16 March, allegedly after those taking part had been threatened by a prison official.

C. Humanitarian response

20. In March 2016, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all modalities from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders, pursuant to resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also continued to deliver assistance to people, in line with previous months. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic continued to provide basic services to areas under its control as well as in many areas beyond its control.

Table 1
Number of people reached by organizations in March 2016

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	259 836
International Organization for Migration	64 487
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	235 029
United Nations Children's Fund	2 800 000
United Nations Development Programme	365 975
United Nations Population Fund	207 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	450 000
World Food Programme	3 700 000
World Health Organization	622 000

21. Cross-border deliveries continued during the reporting period. As at 31 March, the United Nations and its implementing partners had sent 17 convoys from Turkey and Jordan to the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015), benefiting millions of people (see annex, map 1, for more information on United Nations cross-border convoys in March). In line with Security Council resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in

advance of each shipment, including content, destination and number of beneficiaries. No reports were received of any convoys being refused or found to be irregular.

22. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations in Jordan and Turkey. In March, it monitored 17 United Nations humanitarian shipments consisting of 419 trucks, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Mechanism continued to benefit from excellent cooperation with the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

23. In March 2016, inter-agency convoys to the besieged and hard-to-reach locations listed in table 2 were completed, assisting almost 327,000 people in need (see also annex, map 2, for more information on access to besieged and hard-to-reach locations).

Table 2
Inter-agency convoys in March 2016

Date	*Location*	*Type of assistance*
2 March	Mu'addamiyah al-Sham (Rif Dimashq)	Portions of previously excluded medicine and medical supplies
3 March	Wa'r (Homs)	Food, health assistance, non-food items, nutrition supplies, water and sanitation support and education supplies. Surgical items were removed from the convoy
4 and 7 March	Saqba, Ayn Tarma, Hazzah, Bayt Siwa, Jisrayn and Hammurah (Rif Dimashq)	Food, nutrition supplies and health assistance. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy
16 March	Bludan (Rif Dimashq)	Food, wheat flour, medicine and medical supplies, nutrition supplies and non-food items
17 March	Fu'ah and Kafraya (Idlib)	Food, wheat flour, medicine and medical supplies, nutrition supplies and non-food items. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy
	Madaya (Rif Dimashq)	Food, wheat flour, medicine and medical supplies, nutrition supplies and non-food items. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy
	Zabadani (Rif Dimashq)	Food, wheat flour, medicine and medical supplies, nutrition supplies and non-food items. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy
21 March	Urum al-Kubra (Aleppo)	Food, medicine and medical supplies and nutrition supplies
22 and 24 March	Subdistrict of Hulah (Homs)	Surgical items and some of the medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy

24. In March, United Nations agencies also undertook single-agency deliveries to hard-to-reach and cross-line locations. For example, the World Food Programme (WFP), in coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, reached 6,440 people

through cross-line deliveries in Aniq Bajra, Akash and Salba in rural Hama. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) delivered water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and health and nutrition supplies for more than 72,200 people through single-agency convoys to Big Orem (Aleppo), Qal'at al-Madiq (Hama), Wa'r and Taldu (Homs). The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) delivered food parcels, hygiene kits and health-care services to up to 6,000 Palestine refugee families from Yarmuk, Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham.

Humanitarian access

25. Notwithstanding the recent progress made in gaining access to some besieged and hard-to-reach locations, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need of assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic remained challenging in many areas of the country as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines and deliberate restrictions by the parties on the movement of people and goods.

26. Access to the 4.6 million people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained of critical concern. During the reporting period, the United Nations agencies and partners reached 66 of the 154 hard-to-reach locations (43 per cent). Details of assistance to people in hard-to-reach areas in March 2016 are contained in table 3. Nearly half of the people in hard-to-reach areas are in areas controlled by ISIL, to which the United Nations has extremely limited access.

Table 3
United Nations deliveries to the 4.6 million in hard-to-reach areas, March 2016

Sector (United Nations delivery only)	*Number of people reached (as a percentage of 4.6 million)*
Food security	364 800 (7.9)
Health	623 500 (13.5)
Non-food items	155 700 (3.4)
Water, sanitation and hygiene	176 600 (3.8)

27. Since the beginning of 2016, 72 inter-agency convoy requests have been submitted to reach 2.3 million people in besieged and hard-to-reach locations, and the status of those requests is outlined in table 4. On 23 March, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic approved 6 of the 11 locations requested in the April inter-agency convoy plan, as outlined in table 5. The remaining five locations were not approved owing to cited security conditions on the ground; however, a verbal indication was subsequently given for Zabadani. A verbal approval was also given for Mu'addamiyah. The United Nations sent a note verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic on 24 March to seek a revision of the number of approved beneficiaries in Zabadin, Irbin and Zamalka. No formal feedback has been received but the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the United Nations are proceeding with planning those convoys on the basis of the revised beneficiary numbers.

Table 4
Status of inter-agency convoy requests for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2016

Status of requests	*Number of requests*
Approved (and convoy proceeded)	16
Approved in principle; awaiting final facilitation letters	21
Denied	5
Submitted and unanswered within a three months' period	30
Total submitted	**72**

Table 5
April inter-agency convoy requests in March 2016

Location	*Status*
Kafr Batna	Approved
Zabadin	Approved
Madaya	Approved
Irbin and Zamalka	Approved
Fu'ah and Kafraya	Approved
Eastern Aleppo city	Approved
Darayya	Not approved
Duma	Not approved
Eastern Harasta	Not approved
Mu'addamiyah	Not approved
Zabadani	Not approved

28. Active conflict in several governorates hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as people's access to essential services. For example, disruptions to the power supply in the Aleppo area, owing to damage to transmission lines and power plants, have resulted in reduced access to drinking water for around two million people in western and eastern Aleppo. Although access and security conditions improved in most of Aleppo and Idlib governorates throughout March, aerial bombardments and ground fighting in areas controlled by ISIL have hampered access and disrupted telecommunication channels.

29. Deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties also continued to prevent aid delivery. For example, WFP continued to be unable to reach people in need in areas controlled by ISIL owing to the inability to work independently and to monitor activities. This affected some 600,000 people in need in Dayr al-Zawr and Raqqah governorates, parts of rural Aleppo, southern rural Hasakah and

northwestern rural Hama. Meanwhile, seven requests from WFP to the Syrian authorities to reach 14,000 people in Rif Dimashq (Herne, Sahl, Rankus and Hafir al-Tahta) were not approved on grounds of security conditions.

30. The Nusaybin-Qamishli crossing in Hasakah governorate has been temporarily closed by the Turkish authorities owing to security concerns since 27 December 2015. In March, the last available food rations in the Qamishli warehouse, sufficient for 2,400 people, were distributed to people in need in Hasakah city. WFP has supplies to cover the needs of 17,000 people for one week in case of sudden displacement. Reports continue to be received that people have adopted negative coping strategies, including eating only one meal per day and drastically reducing the types of food consumed.

31. As at 31 March, 52 United Nations visa requests (either new visas or renewals) remained pending, 7 of which had exceeded the 15 working-day limit. In March, a total of 279 visas for United Nations staff from nine agencies were approved, of which 112 were new visas and 167 renewals.

32. A total of 16 international NGOs are authorized to operate in the Syrian Arab Republic. Three more such organizations have applications for approval by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic pending. International NGOs continued to face a series of administrative hurdles and restrictions that had an impact on their ability to operate, including in gaining permission to undertake independent needs assessments.

33. The number of national NGOs authorized to partner with United Nations organizations increased from 142 to 143 in March. Authorized national NGOs continue to operate under complex procedures in partnering with United Nations agencies.

Besieged areas

34. Of the 4.6 million people living in hard-to-reach areas, some 486,700 people remained besieged. This includes some 268,200 people besieged by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in various locations in Rif Dimashq, 6,000 people besieged by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-State armed opposition groups in Yarmuk, in Damascus, some 200,000 people besieged by ISIL in Dayr al-Zawr city, and some 12,500 people besieged by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front in Fu'ah and Kafraya, in Idlib governorate.

35. In March, inter-agency convoys assisted 102,125 people (20.9 per cent of the total population) in 8 of the 18 besieged areas, while some people in Yarmuk could receive assistance in the adjacent town of Yalda. During the reporting period, Syrian authorities did not approve requests for inter-agency convoys to Darayya, Mu'addamiyah and parts of eastern Ghutah (including Duma and Harasta). Humanitarian conditions in those areas are reportedly dire and the United Nations stands ready to deliver assistance to those besieged locations as soon as access is granted. The flow of commercial supplies through official routes remained largely blocked, leading to high prices for commodities reaching besieged areas through unofficial and irregular supply lines. Freedom of movement remained heavily restricted, though limited numbers of people were sporadically allowed to exit and re-enter some besieged areas.

36. In eastern Ghutah, in Rif Dimashq governorate, some 176,500 people remain besieged by government forces in the following locations: Duma, eastern Harasta, Irbin, Zamalka, Ayn Tarma, Hammurah, Jisrayn, Kafr Batna, Saqba and Zabadin. As previously reported, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoys reached Saqba, Ayn Tarma, Bayt Sawa, Jisrayn and Hammurah on 4 and 7 March, delivering multisectoral assistance for some 36,800 people overall, and vaccines were delivered to the sub-branch of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Duma on 4 March and vaccinations have started in several locations in Eastern Ghutah.

37. In Madaya (and Buqayn), in Rif Dimashq governorate, some 42,000 people remain besieged by government forces. United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoys delivered multisectoral assistance on 17 March. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy by the authorities. While the nutrition status of people in Madaya has significantly improved, five deaths have been reported in the area since February, including two children suffering from diseases associated with malnutrition. A high number of others are reported to suffer from oedema, which is associated with a lack of protein. On 31 March, the evacuation of two humanitarian cases and 10 accompanying family members from the towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib was completed. In addition, three humanitarian cases and seven accompanying family members were evacuated from Zabadani and Madaya. However, on 29 March, a landmine explosion in the town of Buqayn caused the deaths of three children, two of whom died after they were denied medical evacuation, and injured two people.

38. In Fu'ah and Kafraya, in Idlib governorate, some 12,500 people remain besieged by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front. United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoys delivered multisectoral assistance to Fu'ah and Kafraya on 17 March. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy.

39. In Zabadani, in Rif Dimashq governorate, some 700 people remain besieged by government forces. On 17 March, an inter-agency convoy delivered multisectoral assistance sufficient for one month for 1,000 people in Zabadani. Surgical items and medicine and medical supplies were removed from the convoy. On 25 March, the last surgeon in Zabadani and two other men were reportedly killed by gunfire from pro-government militias. A number of other individuals were injured in the incident.

40. In Darayya, in Rif Dimashq governorate, about 4,000 people remain besieged by government forces. The United Nations has been unable to deliver assistance to Darayya since November 2012.

41. In Mu'addamiyah al-Sham, in Rif Dimashq governorate, about 45,000 people remain besieged by government forces. On 2 March, United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoys delivered portions of previously excluded medicine and medical supplies to Mu'addamiyah al-Sham.

42. In Yarmuk, in Damascus, some 6,000 people are besieged by government forces and non-State armed opposition groups. All UNRWA operations in Yarmuk remained suspended in March. UNRWA continued its missions to Yalda, following approval on 13 February, and has so far distributed 11,700 family food parcels, 19,160 blankets and 11,600 hygiene kits to families from Yarmuk, Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham. Since 9 March 2016, 1,100 Palestine refugees have received medical

care through a mobile medical team, and 80 patients have received dental care at the UNRWA mobile dental clinic deployed in Yalda.

43. In the government-controlled western neighbourhoods of the city of Dayr al-Zawr, some 200,000 people are besieged by ISIL. The humanitarian situation in the besieged area continues to deteriorate, with shortages of food and medical care, and severe malnutrition reported during the reporting period. On 10, 12 and 14 April, WFP successfully carried out high-altitude airdrops over the besieged city, dropping a total of 55 tons of urgently needed food assistance. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent distributed partial food rations for up to 25,000 beneficiaries in the areas of the besieged city most affected by food insecurity.

Free passage of medical supplies, personnel and equipment

44. Although at lower levels than in previous months, attacks on medical facilities and personnel continued during the reporting period. Physicians for Human Rights documented one attack on a medical facility in Ladhiqiyah governorate and the deaths of four medical personnel in March.

45. The World Health Organization (WHO) and health partners delivered some 622,248 medical treatments, including 546,743 across conflict lines in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Rif Dimashq and Homs governorates. Between 13 and 17 March, WHO, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, conducted a national polio vaccination campaign reaching 2.1 million children under five. The Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, also conducted a rubella vaccination campaign in the north of the country. In Idlib, nearly 290,066 children were vaccinated (97 per cent of the target). UNICEF also reported that more than 7,200 children received routine vaccinations in Aleppo, Ladhiqiyah, Tartus, and Raqqah in March.

46. Since 1 January 2016, WHO has submitted 18 individual requests to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to deliver medical supplies to 54 locations in nine governorates. The Government has approved four requests, one of which is to deliver medical supplies to 25 locations in six governorates. Meanwhile, 14 requests remain unanswered.

47. Despite ongoing access to besieged areas during the reporting period by inter-agency convoys, the removal of life-saving medicine and medical supplies continued, with nearly 19,000 treatments removed from convoys in March intended for Mu'addamiyah al-Sham, Zabadani, Madaya (Buqayn) and Hammurah in Rif Dimashq, Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib and Taldu in Homs. Removed items included surgical supplies, emergency kits, trauma kits, mental health medicine, insulin, burn kits and antiseptic.

Safety and security of staff and premises

48. A total of 35 United Nations staff members, 33 of whom are UNRWA area staff, 1 is from the United Nations Development Programme and 1 from UNICEF, continue to be detained or missing. The total number of humanitarian workers killed in the conflict since March 2011 is 87, divided as 17 staff members of the United Nations, 53 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, 8 volunteers and staff members of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and 9 staff members of international NGOs. Two of those victims have been killed since 1 January 2016.

III. Observations

49. The cessation of hostilities and the resumption of aid to certain areas have offered much needed relief for some of the Syrians who have suffered most heavily during years of conflict. While this is a welcome development that shows what can be done with sufficient political will and access, too many people remain threatened by fighting and unable to have access to the assistance they need. Needless deaths continue to be reported from indiscriminate attacks on civilians as well as through the use of siege and starvation as a tool of war. As indicated in my previous report (S/2016/272), the ceasefire and the initial progress in humanitarian access provided a glimmer of hope to Syrians that an end to their suffering might be near. The decrease in fighting during March is a concrete result of the cessation of hostilities, but it is not enough. I call on all parties to immediately end the killing and the destruction of essential infrastructure. Initial progress must be sustained as we strive to finally end this dark chapter in the history of the Syrian Arab Republic and the world.

50. The United Nations is delivering assistance at levels higher than in 2015, both in cross-border convoys coming from Turkey and Jordan and through our inter-agency convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach areas. United Nations convoys brought food aid to more than 100,000 people in besieged areas alone in March. I welcome the progress made in assisting those difficult areas and I also recognize the ongoing work of humanitarian actors to provide assistance to millions each month around the country. However, I am concerned that the initial momentum of the first part of the year may be slowing. Recent gains in access have been comparatively limited and each deployment is hard won. March saw a slight decrease from February in the number of people reached in besieged areas, and access in the last weeks has slowed further. Delays in receiving final clearance from Syrian authorities and denials from local authorities have held back a number of convoys in the past weeks, as has ongoing fighting. While we will continue to call for increased access, those sieges must end. Reopening besieged areas is the only way to truly ensure the provision of assistance to all and to guarantee that assistance can be sustained.

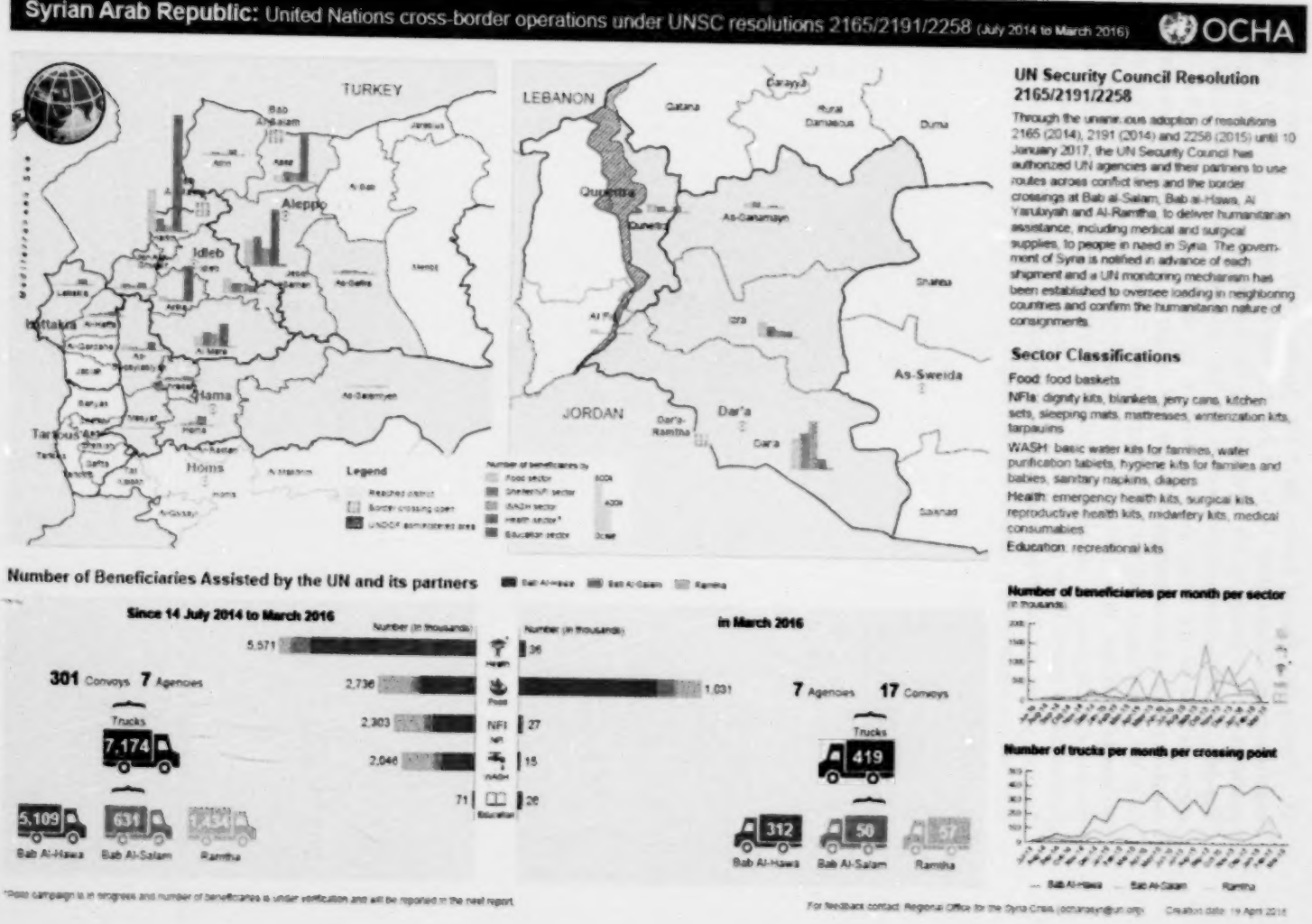
51. I condemn the ongoing blockage of medical evacuations, which has led to unnecessary deaths and suffering. After years of conflict, only 40 per cent of medical facilities remain functioning, most of which are in severe disrepair, and too many injured do not have the chance to receive even basic levels of care. In March, for example, three children in Madaya and Wa'r perished after their evacuations were refused by those laying siege to their towns. Another young man in Madaya faced the same terrible fate. Access to health care and medical treatment is a fundamental human right protected under international law. Parties must adopt a more timely and systematic system for evacuations that is neither linked to negotiated agreements nor quid pro quo in nature.

52. For those displaced by conflict, returning to their homes brings untold challenges in resuming their daily life. An important element of addressing protection risks is removing or reducing the threat of explosive weapons. It is estimated that some 5.1 million people are living in areas highly contaminated by mines and unexploded ordinance, with more than 2 million children at risk. I call on the Syrian authorities to facilitate all efforts to address the presence of explosive weapons.

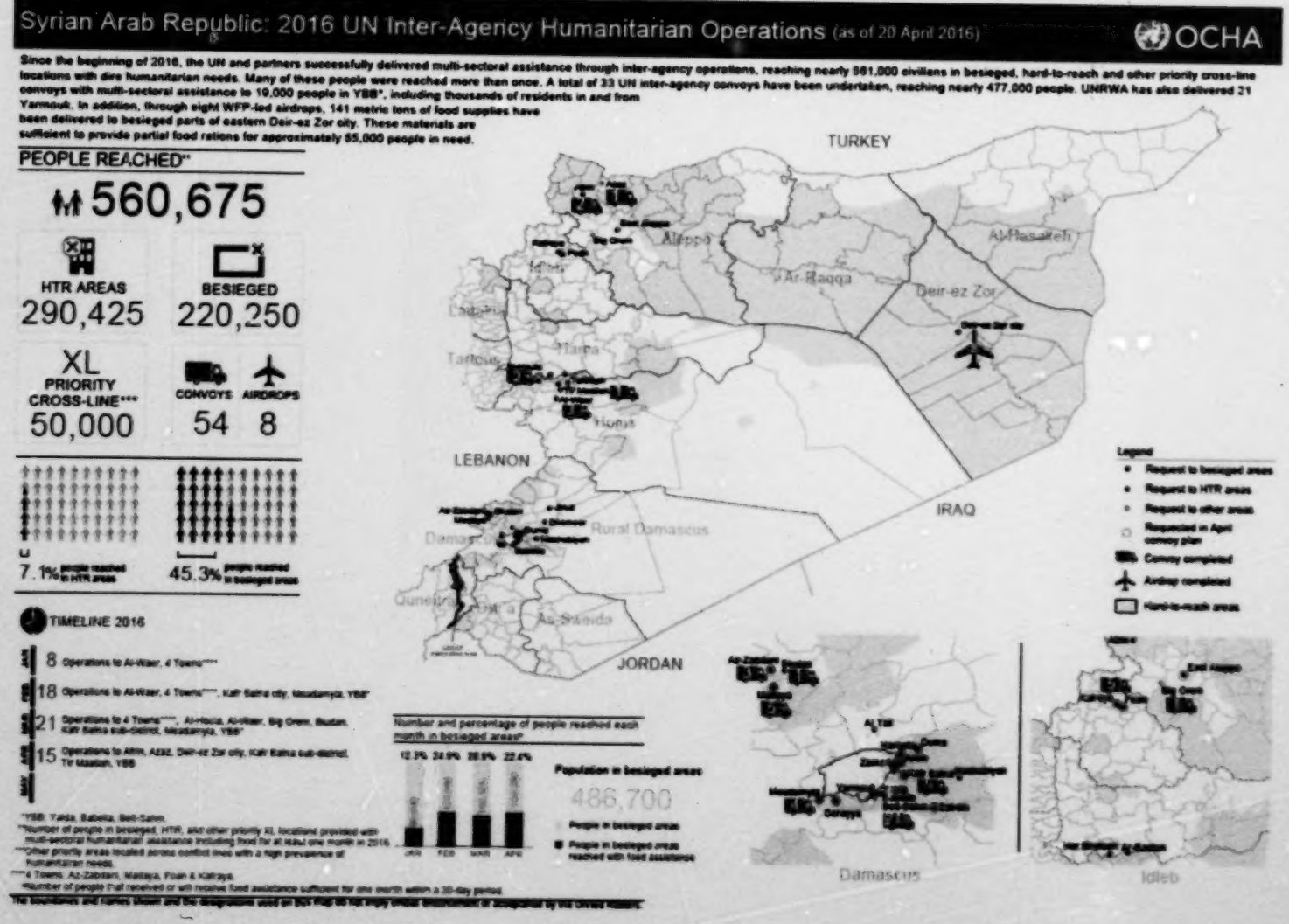
53. Finally, my Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, held intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva from 14 to 24 March. The negotiations continued in the proximity format. Based on his meetings with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the opposition and civil society, the Special Envoy developed 12 points of commonalities on the future political solution for the Syrian Arab Republic. He reconvened the negotiations on 13 April and sought to obtain detailed proposals from the Government and the High Negotiations Committee on their respective visions of transition, in line with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva Communiqué. It remains our collective responsibility to ensure that the provisions, so carefully set out by the Security Council and the International Syria Support Group on all three tracks, humanitarian, cessation of hostilities and political, are preserved and consolidated in parallel.

Annex

Map 1


Syrian Arab Republic: United Nations cross-border operations under UNSC resolutions 2165/2191/2258 (July 2014 to March 2016)
OCHA
TURKEY
LEBANON
JORDAN
Aleppo
Idleb
Hama
Homs
Tartous
Lattakia
Quneitra
Dara
As-Sweida
Legend
UN Security Council Resolution 2165/2191/2258
Through the unanimous adoption of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) until 10 January 2017, the UN Security Council has authorized UN agencies and their partners to use routes across conflict lines and the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, to people in need in Syria. The government of Syria is notified in advance of each shipment and a UN monitoring mechanism has been established to oversee loading in neighboring countries and confirm the humanitarian nature of consignments.
Sector Classifications
Food: food baskets
NFIs: dignity kits, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mattresses, winterization kits, tarpaulins
WASH: basic water kits for families, water purification tablets, hygiene kits for families and babies, sanitary napkins, diapers
Health: emergency health kits, surgical kits, reproductive health kits, midwifery kits, medical consumables
Education: recreational kits
Number of Beneficiaries Assisted by the UN and its partners
Since 14 July 2014 to March 2016
301 Convoys 7 Agencies
Trucks
7,174
5,109
631
Bab Al-Hawa
Bab Al-Salam
Ramtha
5,571
2,736
2,303
2,046
71
36
1,031
27
15
26
in March 2016
7 Agencies 17 Convoys
Trucks
419
312
50
67
Number of beneficiaries per month per sector
(in thousands)
Number of trucks per month per crossing point
Bab Al-Hawa
Bab Al-Salam
Ramtha
*Polio campaign is in progress and number of beneficiaries is under verification and will be reported in the next report.
For feedback contact: Regional Office for the Syria Crisis (ocharosy@un.org)
Creation date: 19 April 2016

Map 2


Syrian Arab Republic: 2016 UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Operations (as of 20 April 2016)*
OCHA
Since the beginning of 2016, the UN and partners successfully delivered multi-sectoral assistance through inter-agency operations, reaching nearly 561,000 civilians in besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority cross-line locations with dire humanitarian needs. Many of these people were reached more than once. A total of 33 UN inter-agency convoys have been undertaken, reaching nearly 477,000 people. UNRWA has also delivered 21 convoys with multi-sectoral assistance to 19,000 people in YSB**, including thousands of residents in and from Yarmouk. In addition, through eight WFP-led airdrops, 141 metric tons of food supplies have been delivered to besieged parts of eastern Deir-ez Zor city. These materials are sufficient to provide partial food rations for approximately 65,000 people in need.
PEOPLE REACHED**
560,675
HTR AREAS
290,425
BESIEGED
220,250
XL PRIORITY CROSS-LINE***
50,000
CONVOYS
54
AIRDROPS
8
7.1% people reached in HTR areas
45.3% people reached in besieged areas
TIMELINE 2016
8 Operations to Al-Wa'er, 4 Towns****
18 Operations to Al-Wa'er, 4 Towns****, Kafr Batna city, Moadamiya, YSB*
21 Operations to 4 Towns****, Al-Hosia, Al-Wa'er, Big Orem, Rustan, Kafr Batna sub-district, Moadamiya, YSB*
15 Operations to Afrin, AZAZ, Deir-ez Zor city, Kafr Batna sub-district, Tir Maaleh, YSB
*YSB: Yalda, Babeila, Beit-Sahm
**Number of people in besieged, HTR, and other priority XL locations provided with multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance including food for at least one month in 2016.
***Other priority areas located across conflict lines with a high prevalence of humanitarian needs.
****4 Towns: Az-Zabdani, Madaya, Foah & Kafraya.
*Number of people that received or will receive food assistance sufficient for one month within a 30-day period.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Number and percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas*
12.3% 24.9% 38.9% 22.4%
DEC FEB MAR APR
Population in besieged areas
486,700
People in besieged areas
People in besieged areas reached with food assistance
TURKEY
Aleppo
Al-Hasakeh
Ar-Raqqa
Deir-ez Zor
Tartous
Homs
LEBANON
IRAQ
Rural Damascus
As-Sweida
JORDAN
Legend
Request to besieged areas
Request to HTR areas
Request to other areas
Requested in April convoy plan
Convoy completed
Airdrop completed
Hard-to-reach areas
Damascus
Idleb